Observations on a Gwardar *(Demansia nuchalis).*—The following notes eoneern a Gwardar on our farm 4 miles south-east of Northam. The snake was first seen in February 1966 at the bottom of an old underground eoncrete tank about nine feet deep, open at the top and littered with bricks, stones, dead leaves, sticks and two small sheets of iron.

On the first two oceasions we saw it (both in the morning) the snake moved quiekly under a sheet of iron. On the afternoons of those days when the tank was shaded by a tree there was no sign of it. On the third oecasion (at about 1 p.m.) the snake seemed to be hunting. It was going in and out of holes in the debris. Although it had obviously seen my wife and me it continued to explore the tank and allowed us a good view of it.

As the snake was only moving slowly and at times stopping to look about, I deeided to drop a few pebbles near it to see its reaetion. The first time the snake did not move. The seeond time the pebble rolled to within 8 inches of its head. For a moment the snake remained still; then it struck the pebble, after which it paid no attention to it.

This prompted us to throw a dead mouse into the tank; it disappeared by the next day. After eatching a seeond mouse we found the snake prowling in the eentre of the tank and faeing away from us. The mouse was thrown about two and a half feet to the right of the snake, whieh jerked its head to the left and looked up at us, that is away from the mouse. It then began to turn in all direetions as though it could smell the mouse but not see it. After a few moments it found the mouse, moved

Gwardar swallowing a mouse.

—Photo A. L. Milhinch

its snout over it, but made no attempt to strike. Then taking hold of the mouse by the neck, it spent some time in positioning it so as to swallow it head-first. Swallowing took a while, but after passing the snake's throat the mouse moved quickly down the gullet. The snake seemed to flatten its body behind the bulging mouse when forcing it along its gullet. It then crawled under a stone and remained out of sight.

Next day a third mouse was thrown in and fell about three feet in front of the snake, which after a moment's hesitation went straight to the mouse as if it had seen it. After swallowing the mouse the snake resumed its prowling.

The fourth and last mouse fell near some debris and the snake did not find it until it had searched for some time. It took 3½ minutes for the mouse's tail to disappear and another half a minute for it to reach the snake's stomach (judging from the disappearing bulge). On this and other occasions it was noticed that after swallowing the mouse the snake would open its mouth widely and gulp.

When next seen the snake was lethargic and only moved slowly when pebbles were dropped near it. During the following two weeks the snake was not seen, despite my visiting the tank every few days. It was discovered on March 28 that the snake had sloughed its old skin and was moving about as lively as ever. It was then shot and measured (total length, 38½ in.).

The specimen is now registered in the Western Australian Museum as R. 26522.

—A. L. MILHINCH, Seabrook.

Two Names of Western Australian Plants, one New and one Evaluated but Discarded.—During our work in the Rijksherbarium at Leiden, Holland, on the flora of the Malesian area, comprising the islands between the Asian and Australian continents, we are seldom faced with research on Western Australian plant species, except in odd cases. One of these is *Albizia lophantha* Bth. which appears conspecific with *Albizia montana* Miq., a beautiful, short-lived tree of the montane zone of Java and the Lesser Sunda Is.

On the generic level botanical "similarity" is of course more frequent, but on the whole also here there is a distinct cleavage between the dry subtropical-temperate Western Australian flora and the humid tropical Malesian flora. Naturally, the South Malesian borderlands, which are subject to a seasonal monsoon climate, that is the major part of Java, the Lesser Sunda Is., the South Moluccas, and the extreme southern lowlands of New Guinea, harbour some stray representatives of genera which are otherwise almost confined to the Australian continent. I may mention here for example: *Ptilotus, Pimelea, Stylidium, Velleia, Goodenia, Calogyne, Leschenaultia, Citriobates, Banksia, Cartonema, Hibbertia, Haemodorum, Gompholobium, Kennedya, Patersonia, Tricoryne, Caladenia, Diuris, Microtis, Pterostylus, Thelymitra, Flindersia, Stackhousia,* etc. Such genera are often more typically Eastern Australian than Western Australian.

Recently, however, in two cases our work affected the specific identity of Western Australian species. As their evaluation was published in non-Australian journals, it may be worthwhile to extract the evidence here.

The first is a species of *Euthales* R.Br., a genus reduced to *Velleia*, viz. *Euthales filiformis* De Vriese, described in Lehmann, "Plant. Preissianae", 1: 414. 1845, collected in Western Australia: "in solo sublimoso fertili prope praedium rusticum Dom. Marell,